

Shirley Public Access Statement

Proceeding - 05-311

The Shirley Public Access Corporation feels that the proposed changes in public access channels and organizations funding would be, if enacted, deleterious to the local community we serve.

Effects would include:

- 1.) stifling local democracy as vital meetings ceased to being covered, resulting in a less informed and less empowered citizenry.
- 2.) A less culturally aware community as local cultural organizations lost access to vital parts of their audience like shut-ins, and underserved populations.
- 3.) the community bulletin board running between shows is critical to the dissemination of information on community events, and sometimes on public safety. Loss of the bulletin board would be a blow to the existence of local community.

Some of the effects would be rapid. Professional staff frequently in the lead as trainers and cheer leaders to volunteers, and local cultural organizations would be among the first cut.

Other effects would roll out over months or a period of years as equipment wears out, becomes obsolete, and can no longer be replaced due lack of funds. The disheartened few remaining volunteers would have little recourse but to be the last ones out the door.

Regional and national media pay almost no attention to towns like Shirley. The only time the Globe, Lowell Sun or even the "local" papers pay attention to Shirley events are in cases of tragedy.

Local access is the Town's only local media. Large numbers of citizens cannot attend School Committee meetings, Board of Selectmen meetings, or any of the other important meetings that have great impact on their lives. Our government channel gives them access to the information they need to make informed choices.

Thanks to our pool of easy to use portable equipment of equipment local cultural organizations feel empowered to record their events and disseminate them to a wide audience over our public channel and educational channels .

The Video On Demand service we offer allows all citizens free access to meetings and local cultural events whenever it is convenient to their schedule. Shut-ins, those working off shifts and others are able to stay informed of local events only because of local cable access.